



Library History

This Timeline is a work in progress. Please feel free to submit information regarding notable events and people who have contributed to the history of the Library. Email contributions to:

reference@henderson.lib.nc.us [1]

1894: Lila Ripley Barnwell donated some books and persuaded the Town Commissioners to give "The Library Club" a room at the newly completed City Hall.

1897: Hendersonville Town Commissioner gave another room at City Hall to be the Library Reading Room.

1899: Miss Mary Sample was appointed to be in charge of the Library Room two or three afternoons a week.

1904: The New County Courthouse was completed and the Library moved to a room in it.

1908: Col. Sylvester Everett of Columbus, Ohio, traded favors with Charles French Toms, local lawyer. Toms helped Everett (a new property owner in Western North Carolina) get to the National Republican Convention and in exchange, Everett got Andrew Carnegie interested in funding a library for Hendersonville.

1911: Toms persuaded his father, Captain Marion Columbus Toms to donate the lot at the corner of King Street and 4th Avenue as the site for the new library. The Town Commissioners agreed to hire a librarian and a janitor and financially support the library once built. The commissioners adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, Andrew Carnegie has agreed to give \$10,000 to erect a free public library building on the condition the Town furnish a lot; and, whereas, a suitable lot has been made available by Capt., M.C. Toms, the offer is accepted and a tax will be levied to raise \$1,000 annually.

1913: The building on the corner of King Street and 4th Avenue is completed. The Town Commissioners appoint a committee comprised of two women from each church to purchase books for the new library.

September, 1914: The new Hendersonville Library opens it's doors to the public with 3000 square feet and approximately 600 books. The basement contained newspapers, magazines and the furnace.

1915: Town Commissioners hired the first librarian, Mrs. Norma Sandifer at a salary of \$25 per month.

1916: The first annual report of the library reported the following:

Total Volumes:	1,412
Total Circulation:	7,795
Total Number of Borrowers:	557
Librarian's Salary:	\$300
Total expenditures for the year:	\$611.97

1921: Miss Anne Sample replaced Mrs. Sandler as librarian.

1936: A fire damages the Library.

1950: The county joined together with the city to support the library. It was decided that a County librarian would be hired because in order to get state aid it was required that the librarian have a professional degree. Miss Anne Sample remained the City Librarian.



1951: Mrs. Grace Rodman Neighbors was hired as the County librarian and bookmobile service was begun using the Transylvania County bookmobile part-time.

1952: A used bookmobile was purchased from Buncombe County. Mrs. W.B.W. Howe was hired as a professional librarian to replace Mrs. Neighbors. Mrs. Howe resigned a few months after she started and there was a gap of 3 years with no professional librarian.

1956: Miss Mary Kent Seagle was hired as professional librarian.

1957: Long time City librarian, Miss Anne Sample retired. The Friends of the Henderson County Public Library was established. In December, a new Ford Vanette was purchased to serve as a bookmobile. A contest among school children resulted in the new bookmobile being dubbed "Ridge Runner".

1958: Desegregation begins at the Library. Henderson County was still a segregated community when a group of African American women and children came to the library on King Street to check out books. Mary Kent Seagle issued library cards and the new patrons were able to check out materials.

(Source: A Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County)

1961: The Library building was enlarged to accommodate its growing collection.

1966: Miss Mary Kent Seagle resigned as librarian. Mrs. Robert Marshall became librarian in June of that year.

1967: It became apparent the library needed new larger space and a search began. Eventually the property at 301 N. Washington Street was considered (site of the Women's Club) and the County Commissioners purchased the property.

1968: Construction of the new library began.

1970: The New library at 301 N. Washington St. opened for business.

1977: After delivering books to the far reaches of the county for more than 25 years the bookmobile service comes to an end.

1977: The Fletcher Library opened in a mobile classroom on HWY 25.

1982: The Etowah Branch Library, sponsored by the Etowah Lions Club, opened in a mobile classroom.

1983: The Library received a \$5,000 grant from the State Library to fund a feasibility study for computerizing library records.

1983: The Etowah Grange leased its building on Brickyard Road to the County to house the Etowah Branch Library.

1985: The Library computerized its catalog and patron records. In fact, the library was the first library system in North Carolina to install the DYNIX integrated library system.

1989: In March the Library Building Committee presented its plans for a two story 1.7 million addition to the Main Library. Much of the funding came from two bequests; a \$940,450 bequest by Russell E. Caywood in 1988 and \$165,000 bequest made in 1987 by Donald Stuart Aiken.

1989: The Edneyville Branch Library opened in a mobile classroom.

1989: On September 13th the Trustees and the Friends of the Library hosted a reception to celebrate the library's 75th anniversary and to officially welcome the new library director Bill Snyder who was hired in July.



1990: On July 25th at 10 am groundbreaking took place for the Main Library addition.

1990: The Green River Branch Library opened on Green River Rd., Tuxedo.

1991: In January the Main Library temporarily relocated to the old Gray Hosiery Mill, on the corner of Grove St. and 4th Avenue East. The Library operated from this location for a year while the main building was renovated.

1992: The Main Library moved its operations back to the newly renovated Washington Street location in January. There was a formal dedication and open house for the newly expanded facility on May 24th.

1993: The Etowah Branch Library was renovated and expanded.

1999: In January the Edneyville Branch Library opened in its new building located near the fire station on HWY 64 East.

2004: In January the Library completed its migration to DYNIX's Horizon Information Management System, a windows based ILS.

2005: The Mills River Branch, the library system's first storefront location, opened in April.

2005: In November the Library joined the North Carolina Digital Library and began circulating downloadable titles. In that first month 6 items were downloaded. (Fast forward to November 2013 when, 3,958 titles were downloaded in that month alone)

2006: In March wireless Internet access was provided at the Main Library.

2008: April 30th the formal dedication of the new Etowah Branch Library took place. The 8,100 square foot building was designed by Craig, Gaulden, and Davis of Greenville, S.C. The budget for the library was 2.1 million, including contributions from the Richard and Betty Scott estate in the Community Foundation.

2008: In August the Main Library installed 2 Apex XpressCheck self-checkout machines from Integrated Technology Group. Patrons began to check out items for themselves.

2011: February, the Mills River Branch relocated to the new Town Hall location.

2014: The Library celebrated its Centennial with programs throughout the year and a community party on September 21st. On October 1st, Director William Snyder retired after 25 years of service to Henderson County.

2015: On January 1st, Trina Rushing became the new Library Director.